

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
Accountability Review - Focus Monitoring Report 2007-2008**

**Team Members:** Rita Pettigrew, Susan Sletto, Donna Huber, Education Specialists and Cindy Kirschman; Transition Liaison

**Dates of On Site Visit:** March 25, 2008

**Date of Report:** April 14, 2008

3 month update due: July 14, 2008 **Received July 2008**

6 month update due: October 14, 2008 **Received October 2008**

9 month update due: January 14, 2009

Closed Jan. 21, 2009

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**Program monitoring and evaluation.**

In conjunction with its general supervisory responsibility under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B, Special Education Programs (SEP) of the Office of Educational Services and Support shall monitor agencies, institutions, and organizations responsible for carrying out special education programs in the state, including any obligations imposed on those agencies, institutions, and organizations. The department shall ensure:

- (1) That the requirements of this article are carried out;
- (2) That each educational program for children with disabilities administered within the state, including each program administered by any other state or local agency, but not including elementary schools and secondary schools for Indian children operated or funded by the Secretary of the Interior:
  - (a) Is under the general supervision of the persons responsible for educational programs for children with disabilities in the department; and
  - (b) Meets the educational standards of the state education agency, including the requirements of this article; and
- (3) In carrying out this article with respect to homeless children, the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended to January 1, 2007, are met. (Reference- ARSD 24:05:20:18.)

**State monitoring--Quantifiable indicators and priority areas.**

The department shall monitor school districts using quantifiable indicators in each of the following priority areas, and using such qualitative indicators as are needed to adequately measure performance in those areas:

- (1) Provision of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment;
- (2) Department exercise of general supervision, including child find, effective monitoring, the use of resolution meetings, mediation, and a system of transition services as defined in this article and article 24:14; and
- (3) Disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services, to the extent the representation is the result of inappropriate identification. (Reference-ARSD 24:05:20:18:02.)

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**State enforcement -- Determinations.**

On an annual basis, based on local district performance data, information obtained through monitoring visits, and other information available, the department shall determine whether each school district meets the requirements and purposes of Part B of the IDEA...

Based upon the information obtained through monitoring visits, and any other public information made available, Special Education Programs of the Office of Educational Services and Support determines if the agency, institution, or organization responsible for carrying out special education programs in the state:

- Meets the requirements and purposes of Part B of the Act;
- Needs assistance in implementing the requirements of Part B of the Act;
- Needs intervention in implementing the requirements of Part B of the Act; or
- Needs substantial intervention in implementing the requirements of Part B of the Act. (Reference- ARSD 24:05:20:23.04.)

#### **Deficiency correction procedures.**

The department shall require local education agencies to correct deficiencies in program operations that are identified through monitoring as soon as possible, but not later than one year from written identification of the deficiency. The department shall order agencies to take corrective actions and to submit a plan for achieving and documenting full compliance. (Reference-ARAD 24:05:20:20.)

### **FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT**

**Finding:** Meets Requirements

**Corrective Action:** none

### **GENERAL SUPERVISION -1**

**ARSD 24:05:25:04:02. Determination of needed evaluation data.** As part of an evaluation, the individual education program team and other individuals with knowledge and skills necessary to interpret evaluation data, determine whether the child has a disability, and determine whether the child needs special education and related services, as appropriate, shall: review existing evaluation data on the child, including evaluations and information provided by the parents of the child; current classroom-based assessments and observations; and observations by teachers and related services providers.

**Finding:** File reviews completed by the team indicated parental input into the reevaluation process was not documented for students who receive services on the SDSBVI campus. Staff interview concluded they were not familiar with this requirement.

<b>Corrective Action:</b> Document the specific activities and procedures that will be implemented and the data/criteria that will be used to verify compliance.	<b>Timeline for Completion</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	(SEP Use Only) Date Met
<b>Activity/Procedure:</b> 1. The school will review and revise policy/procedures in their comprehensive plan for special education, indicating specifically when parent input into the evaluation process is needed to meet the special education requirements.  <b>Data Collection:</b> The agency will submit a copy to SEP of the revised policy/procedure (comprehensive plan for special education).	July 14, 2008	SDSBVI. staff	<b>Met July 2008</b>

<p>2. The school will ensure parental input into the reevaluation process is obtained and documented for all evaluations administrated.</p> <p><b>Data Collection:</b> The Administrator will spot check two student files that have reevaluation assessment since the onsite review to verify parental into the reevaluation process. Total number of files reviewed along with findings will be reported to SEP</p>			<p><b>Met July 2008</b></p>
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### 3 month Progress Report:

1. The SDSBVI comprehensive plan is currently in the process of being reviewed by the SDSBVI superintendent Mark Krogstrand, SDSBVI Principal, and Janel Ludwig, SDSBVI Student Services Coordinator, met with Rita Pettigrew, OSE Focus Report Chair/contact, on Wed., May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008, to review all planned SDSBVI responses to recommendations received as a result of the March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008, on site review.

2. As per input and discussion with SDSBVI faculty members, on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008, it was recommended that parental input into / with the reevaluation process will be ensured via telephone contact with the parent from the SDSBVI Student Services Director, Janel Ludwig, prior to the evaluations being conducted, and parental input documented via log sheet noting parental suggestions for additional evaluation supports. This information will be shared with the evaluation team members in planning the evaluations.

3. At the time of this submittal, one student file, (Riley Shaffer, IEP meeting 5/23/08) has been spot checked by the SDSBVI Principal, concerning the reevaluation process. File was found to be in order at this time. **Compliance Met- No further documentation needed**

### 6 month Progress Report:

### 9 month Progress Report:

## GENERAL SUPERVISION - 2

**ARSD 24:05:25:06. Reevaluations.** A school district shall ensure that a reevaluation of each child with a disability is conducted in accordance with this chapter if the district determines that the educational or related service needs, including improved academic achievement and functional performance of the child, warrant a reevaluation, or if the child's parents or teacher requests a reevaluation.

A reevaluation conducted under this section may occur not more than once a year, unless the parent and district agree otherwise, and must occur at least once every three years, unless the parent and the district agree that a reevaluation is unnecessary.

Reevaluations must be completed within 25 school days after receipt by the district of signed consent to reevaluate unless other time limits are agreed to by the school administration and the parents consistent with

**Finding:** File reviews completed by the team indicated reevaluations were not consistently completed within 25 school days, nor was there an agreement to extend timeline.

<b>Corrective Action:</b> Document the specific activities and procedures that will be implemented and the data/criteria that will be used to verify compliance.	<b>Timeline for Completion</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	(SEP Use Only) Date Met
<p><b>Activity/Procedure:</b></p> <p>1. The school will review with staff the 25 school day evaluation timeline and procedures for agreement to extend timeline.</p> <p><b>Data Collection:</b> The school will submit to SEP the date, and how timelines were reviewed with staff at SDSBVI.</p> <p>2. The school will ensure timelines are adhered to when completed an evaluation.</p> <p><b>Data Collection:</b> The Administrator will spot check two student files that have been evaluated since the onsite review to verify timelines have been followed. Total number of files reviewed along with findings will be reported to SEP</p>	July 14, 2008	SDSBVI. staff	<p><b>Met July 2008</b></p> <p><b>Met July 2008</b></p>

**3 month Progress Report:** The 25 school day evaluation timeline and procedures for agreement to extend timeline, and other items related to timelines for evaluation, was reviewed with the SDSBVI faculty / staff members and evaluation team members during meeting of April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Subsequent review of this process was also noted during faculty / staff meeting of May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

The student file of Johnny Sauer was spot-checked by the SDSBVI Principal on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 for the purpose of extending evaluation timeline for completion. File was found to be in order at that time. **Compliance Met- No further documentation needed**

## 6 month Progress Report:

### 9 month Progress Report:

### GENERAL SUPERVISION - 3

**ARSD24:05:25:03.04. Evaluation procedures -- Notice.** The school district shall provide notice to the parents of a child with a disability, in accordance with this article, that describes any evaluation procedures the district proposes to conduct.

**ARSD 24:05:30:05. Content of notice.** The notice must include the following: A description of each evaluation procedure, assessment, record, or report that the district uses as a basis for the proposal or refusal;

**Finding:** File reviews completed by the team indicated areas listed on the prior notice to be evaluated were not completed. File reviews also indicated that information used as a basis for determination of eligibility were not listed on the prior notice to parents.

<b>Corrective Action:</b> Document the specific activities and procedures that will be implemented and the data/criteria that will be used to verify compliance.	<b>Timeline for Completion</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	<b>(SEP Use Only) Date Met</b>
<b>Activity/Procedure:</b> 1. The school will conduct an inservice with appropriate staff on what information should be given to parent when completing prior notices.  <b>Data Collection:</b> The school will submit to SEP the date of the training, who conducted the training, agenda item(s) and who was in attendance.  2. The school will ensure procedural safeguards are adhered to by staff.  <b>Data Collection:</b> The Administrator will spot check two student files that have been evaluated since the onsite review to verify information on the prior notice is accurate and has been followed. Total number of files reviewed along with findings will be reported to SEP	July 14, 2008	SDSBVI. staff	<b>Met July 2008</b>  <b>Pending – October 2008</b>  <b>Met January 2009</b>

### **3 month Progress Report:**

1. The SDSBVI Student Services Director, Janel Ludwig, reviewed the evaluation process / prior notice document with the SDSBVI Liaison for Services, Dawn LaMee. For each meeting prior notice, the Student Services Director will meet and review with the Liaison for Services to review content and process.

2. There have been no new reevaluation / prior notice for meeting process engaged in since the receipt and review of these on site review recommendations from the OSE. Pending- Further information is needed. Please report progress on this at the 6 month date, which will be October 2008

### **6 month Progress Report:**

As of 10/20/08, New / re-evaluation prior notices were conducted this fall for 4 students enrolled with the SDSBVI for a 45 day placement for evaluation.

As of 10/20/08, Re-evaluation prior notices were conducted this fall for 1 on campus SDSBVI student.

A check of these student files, including the prior notices, multi-disciplinary team assessments, eligibility determinations, and subsequent IEPs as developed, show that procedural safeguards as noted by the Accountability Review / Focus Monitoring Report team have been integrated and consistently applied as recommended.

**Information submitted meets the requirement.**

**For full compliance the agency must submit to SEP a copy of the revised policy/procedure (comprehensive plan for special education) indicating specifically when parent input into the evaluation process is needed to meet the special education requirements.**

## 9 month Progress Report:

### **III. REFERRAL, EVALUATION, CONSENT, ELIGIBILITY AND PLACEMENT PROCEDURES**

(from SDSBVI Comp Plan – revised January 2009)

#### **EVALUATIONS OF STUDENTS**

All evaluations and assessments will be performed by personnel who (1) meet all State and Federal rules and regulations and (2) are familiar with and have experience with blind, visually impaired and multihandicapped children.

**THREE-YEAR EVALUATIONS** - The Pre-Evaluation Team (PET) will monitor the schedule for multidisciplinary evaluations that must be completed every three years or more frequently if requested by parent/guardian or teacher. This team will establish schedules and ensure proper notification to parents. **Parents are contacted by phone by the Student Services Director in advance of the evaluation to secure their input into the evaluation process. They review areas of concern and determine areas to be assessed.** Multidisciplinary evaluations must be completed within twenty-five (25) school days of a request or three-year anniversary and an IEP developed within thirty (30) calendar days from the end of the 25 school days evaluation timeline.

**EVALUATIONS OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS** - The SDSBVI bears a responsibility to all students in South Dakota who have visual impairments. IDEA requires that students be evaluated in areas of suspected disability. Visual impairments must be determined by an ophthalmologist or optometrist. Best practice would indicate that for students with visual impairments meeting the state's disability definition, an educator trained and experienced in the educational implication of vision loss should be a part of the Evaluation and IEP teams. Since most local schools lack the trained and experienced personnel for evaluation of these students, evaluations will be done by the SDSBVI staff. If demand exceeds capacity, a waiting list will be developed. The steps in the evaluation process are sequential. Individual circumstances may cause some minor variations.

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>
1. Need for evaluation is identified. .	LEA, B-3 Coordinator, Parent, Outreach Vision Consultants, Transition Specialist
2. Referral for Evaluation; Request for Evaluation Form is completed.	LEA, B-3 Coordinator, Parent, Outreach Vision Consultants, Transition Specialist
3. Request for Evaluation Form is sent to the Liaison.	Outreach Vision Consultants Transition Specialist, LEA
4. Request for Evaluation Form brought to Pre-Evaluation Team (PET). The Pre-Evaluation Team includes the Liaison for Services, Student Services Director/Psychological Examiner, Speech/Language Pathologist, and Certified Low Vision Therapist®.	Liaison
5. Acceptance of student for evaluation. Decisions made about who will complete which tests; (PET meets weekly). Evaluations are scheduled in the order in which the Request for Evaluation Form is received by the Liaison unless special circumstances arise.	PET
6. Parents and LEA are called to set up date.	Liaison
7. E-mail date to Outreach Vision Consultants/Transition Specialist.	Liaison
8. Written confirmation of dates to parents with cc to LEA and Outreach Vision Consultants/Transition Specialist.	Liaison
9. Authorizations forms sent out for signature.	Liaison
10. Gather information on student. a. get vision consultant or transition specialist's file and/or b. get from LEA <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>last three years of IEPs</li><li>any related service reports</li><li>most recent vision reports</li><li>any testing in past three years</li><li>any other relevant information</li></ul> c. Consultants may do some assessments—adaptive behavior surveys, functional vision, and/or vocational surveys. d Parental input is obtained as a part of the process of completing the request for evaluation form.	Liaison

11. File is compiled.

Liaison

ACTIVITY	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
12. File is brought to PET for review.	Liaison
13. Review of student's file and Request for Evaluation Form. a. request any missing information	Liaison
14. Decisions made about who will complete which tests.	PET, Liaison, Outreach Vision Consultants/Transition Specialist
15. Schedule is developed for the evaluation (usually two weeks prior to evaluation date); time is blocked out and length of evaluation is determined.	Liaison
16. Evaluators, Outreach Vision Consultants/Transition Specialist are notified by e-mail and in print.	Liaison
17. The schedule with cover letter is sent to the parents with cc to LEA and Outreach Vision Consultant/Transition Specialist. Enclosures -- maps of Aberdeen and school, information about accommodations, information about SDSBVI. Video may be sent or is viewed with Outreach Vision Consultant/Transition Specialist.	Liaison
18. Student file goes to Staff Work Area to be accessible to evaluators for review.	Liaison
19. Thursday prior to the evaluation, all staff involved in the evaluation meet to review the schedule and student file, and share pertinent information on the student. The Outreach Vision Consultant/Transition Specialist may be involved in person or by teleconference.	PET, Evaluators, Outreach Vision Consultant/Transition Specialist
20. Family is called to finalize travel plans and answer any questions.	Liaison
21. All staff are informed of the accommodations for the family (guests on campus).	Liaison
22. Family arrives on campus and are met by staff.	Liaison
23. Evaluation	Evaluation Team
24. Synthesis of findings	Evaluation Team
25. Wednesday meeting with evaluation team to review results.	Parents, LEA, Evaluation Team, Outreach Vision, Consultants/Transition Specialist
26. Written reports completed.	Evaluators
27. Reports brought into final package and mailed to parents, LEA, Outreach Vision Consultant/Transition Specialist, and others as identified.	Liaison
28. Contact with LEA and/or parents for follow-up questions.	Outreach Vision Consultants /Transition Specialist
29. File returned to Outreach Vision Consultant/Transition Specialist.	Liaison
30. Survey sent to LEA and parents within three weeks.	Liaison
31. Surveys shared with PET and Outreach Vision Consultant/Transition Specialist.	Liaison
32. Annual summary of survey results	Liaison

**EVALUATIONS DURING INTERIM PLACEMENTS** - When a local IEP team determines that the SDSBVI may be an appropriate educational placement for a student, that student may come to the SDSBVI campus on an Interim Placement for evaluation prior to the development of the IEP. All placements will begin with an Interim Placement for Evaluation. The procedure is as follows:

1. The parent and LEA send a written request for placement to the SDSBVI Superintendent.
2. After initial contact from parents/LEA, the Liaison for Services requests the student's current IEP, recent evaluations and last medical eye report.
3. The Liaison for Services will notify the Superintendent, Principal, and Residential Supervisor that the student's records are ready for review.
4. The Admissions Committee will review the materials provided and determine whether the student meets the SDSBVI eligibility guidelines and admission requirements. Parents and LEA are notified by the Liaison for Services.



5. The local school district and parents, with the participation of SDSBVI staff including Outreach Vision Consultants write the interim IEP. The completed IEP must be received by the SDSBVI before the Interim Placement can begin. The parents are also required to complete necessary medical authorization and release forms.
6. The Superintendent, Principal, and Residential Supervisor will schedule and supervise the student's educational program and dorm program during the evaluation period, which cannot exceed 45 school days. During this period, the student's file will be kept in the Staff Work Area for easy access by evaluators.
7. The actual evaluations will be scheduled by the Liaison for Services in coordination with the Principal and follow the same procedure as the evaluations for public schools. The Liaison for Services will notify the faculty and therapists of the evaluation schedule.
8. A staffing will be held upon completion of the evaluations to review the evaluation results.
9. The parents and LEA are contacted by the Liaison for Services to arrange for an IEP meeting. Written notification procedures will be followed.
10. The IEP meeting will include participation by the student (if appropriate), parents, LEA representative, and members of the evaluation team. The evaluation reports are shared. The child's educational needs are identified and placement options are considered. Most appropriate placement in the least restrictive environment is determined and the IEP is written.
11. If placement is to be at the SDSBVI, the parent will be required to provide a copy of the child's birth certificate and immunization record and to complete release and authorization forms.
12. Written copies of the evaluations and IEP are provided to the parents and LEA with a copy placed in the student's file.

#### **GENERAL SUPERVISION - 4**

**ARSD24:05:27:23. Criteria for occupational therapy.** A student may be identified as in need of occupational therapy as a related service if:

- (1) The student has a disability and requires special education;
- (2) The student needs occupational therapy to benefit from special education; and
- (3) The student demonstrates performance on a standardized assessment instrument that falls at least 1.5 standard deviations below the mean in one or more of the following areas: fine motor skills, sensory integration, and visual motor skills.

**ARSD 24:05:27:25. Criteria for physical therapy.** A student may be identified as in need of physical therapy as a related service if:

- (1) The student has a disability and requires special education;
- (2) The student needs physical therapy to benefit from special education; and
- (3) The student demonstrates a delay of at least 1.5 standard deviations below the mean on a standardized motor assessment instrument.

**Finding:** File reviews completed by the team indicated occupational therapy and physical therapy services on several of the student's Individual Educational Program (IEP); however, no standard scores were found to demonstrate a delay of at least 1.5 standard deviations below the mean on a standardized motor assessment instrument. Interviews with teachers indicated that the process for determining related services is not clearly understood by staff.

<b>Corrective Action:</b> Document the specific activities and procedures that will be implemented and the data/criteria that will be used to verify compliance.	<b>Timeline for Completion</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	(SEP Use Only) Date Met
<b>Activity/Procedure:</b> 1. The school will conduct an inservice for	July 14, 2008	SDSBVI.	

<p>appropriate staff on the process for determining related services.</p> <p><b>Data Collection:</b> The school will submit to SEP the date of the training, who conducted the training, agenda item(s) and who was in attendance.</p> <p>2. The school will ensure related services are provided to students who, as the result of individual evaluations, have been identified properly.</p> <p><b>Data Collection:</b> An administrator will spot check two student files that have been evaluated since the onsite review to verify eligibility for related services (OT and PT) has properly been followed. Total number of files reviewed along with findings will be reported to SEP</p>		staff	<p><b>Met July 2008</b></p> <p><b>Met July 2008</b></p>
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### 3 month Progress Report:

1. The SDSBVI Student Services Director, Janel Ludwig, met with the OT / PT related service providers Susan Cybulski, PT: Tim Jalbert OT: of Avera/St. Luke's, Aberdeen SD, on April 22, 2008 for the purpose of reviewing the process of determining eligibility for services bases on evaluation standard scores.

2. A sport check of student file, Riley Schaffer, for IEP held 5/23/08 was reviewed and it was determined that the appropriate related services, based on evaluation process and recommendations are in place at this time. **Compliance Met- No further documentation needed**

6 month Progress Report:

9 month Progress Report:

### DISPROPORTIONALITY

**Finding:** Meets Requirements

**Corrective Action:** none